A Do It Yourself
Fasting Guide

THE INSTITUTION OF FASTING

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CONTENTS

Preface	7
Introduction	9
Chapter I	**11-14**
Fasting in Islam	11
Purpose of Fasting	12
Kinds of Fast	14
Obligatory Fasts	14
Chapter II	**15-22**
Fasts of the Month of Ramadan	15
Commencement	15
Significance of Ramadan	16
Essentials of Fasting	18
(1) Niyyah or intention to Fast	18
(2) Methodology of Fast	19
Suhur	20
Iftar	21
Chapter III	**23-27**
Validation of Fast	23
Conditions that do not invalidate Fast	23
Conditions that do invalidate	23
Fast and require Qada	26
Conditions that does invalidate Fast and requires Kaffarah	27

Chapter IV **29-30**
Exemption from Fasting 29
Fidya 29
Breaking of Fast under Exceptional Conditions 30
Reverence to the Month of Ramadan 30

Chapter V **31-34**
Refasting Days Missed in Ramadan 31
Qada of Deceased Person 32
Time to Make Up Missed Fast (s) 33
Fasting for Atonement or Expiation 33
Kaffarah 34

Chapter VI **35-46**
Impact of Fasting on a Muslim Society 35
Special Blessings of Ramadan 36
(1) Tarawih 37
(2) I'tikaf 39
(3) Laylat-Al-Qadr (The Night of Power) 40
Zakat-ul-Fitr or Sadaqat-ul-Fitr 43
Eid-ul-Fitr (Feast of Fast Breaking) 44
Unity of Muslim Ummah Through Fasting 45

Chapter VII **47-51**
Voluntary or Desirable Fasts 47
(1) Fasting in Muharram 48
(2) Fasting in Sha'ban 48
(3) Fasting in Shawwal 49
(4) Fasting in Dhu-Al-Hijjah 50
(5) Three days of Fasts in Every Month 51
(6) Fasting twice Weekly 51

Chapter VIII 53-54
Discouraged Fasts 53
(1) Fast on Friday Only 53
(2) Singling out any Particular day for Fasting 53
(3) Perpetual Fasting 54

Chapter IX 55-56
Four Unlawful Fasts 55
(1) Fasting on Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha 55
(2) Fasting on the days of Tashriq 55
(3) Fasting of a Woman without Husband's Permission 56
(4) Continuous Fasting (Al-Wisal) 56

Chapter X 57-61
A Dietary study of Muslim Students During Fasting in the Month of Ramadan 57

Notes 62-64

Preface

Over the last five years, globally, Islam has grown faster than all other religions; ahead of Hinduism, Budhism and Christianity. The Muslim Ummah has spread almost too rapidly to fulfill its own needs, the most critical need being quality Islamic literature, especially in the English language. This book is a humble effort to fulfill this need. Many such endeavors must be undertaken, as critical challenges face Muslims entering 15th century Hijra.

In this book, the institution of fasting in Islam is covered in detail in simple English. Material is directly from the most authentic sources of Islam -namely the Qur'an and Sunnah. This manuscript has been thoroughly reviewed by Mufti Maulana Abdullah Saleem, Br. Abdul Rehman Saeed Siddiqui and Dr. Ghulam Haider Asi to whom the author is sincerely indebted.

Science has been and is an essential craft of Muslim civilization. A scientific study on the fasting Muslim students has been conducted by

the author and the results have been included. If there is any good in this work, it is from Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'la. And if there is any error, this author takes responsibility and stands corrected.

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Mohammad Mazhar Hussaini

Introduction

Abstention from food is considered a "fast", in normal terms, consequently going without food is considered "fasting". Many people in the world practice different types of fasting for different reasons. Some fast for physical reasons, some for mental reasons, some for spiritual and others for political reasons.

Fasting has been a part of the universal religious tradition of mankind. Throughout human history, all religions and older civilizations have recommended some days of fasting to their respective adherents.

Fasting has found wide acceptance in all religious systems although its forms and motives vary with different creeds and nationalities. Among the Hindus of India, fasting is considered meritorious on special occasions such as the eclipse of the sun or birthday of revered personalities. The Sabean of Harran used to observe a fast of 30 days, without food and drink from dawn to sunset, in honour of the moon.

The Jews fast for 24 hours on the 10th day[1] (Yom Kippor) of the month of Tishri, as the Day of Atonement. Fasting is considered a means of expiation in Judaism by the injunctions laid by the Holy Torah.[2] Affirming the visit of Moses (peace be upon him) to Mount Sinai on Thursday and his return on Monday, pious Jews fast every Thursday and Monday.

Fasting was recognized as a useful aid in prayer and meditation to beseech divine compassion and assistance among Christians according to the Holy Bible.[3] Every year, Christians observe Lent-six weeks of fasting (excluding all Sundays) and penitence in commemoration of Jesus (peace be upon him) in the wilderness.

Islam has institutionalized fasting as a regular exercise of self-discipline, and self-purification. The Glorious Qur'an,[4] following the previous revelations, reaffirms the continuity of fasting as Divine ordinance. Muslims of the world practice fasting as an obligatory duty of religion. Muslims fast for the entire month of Ramadan-the 9th month of the Islamic (lunar) calendar, from dawn to sunset.

Chapter I

Fasting in Islam

Siyam is an Arabic word for fasting used in the Qur'an. Literally, it means "to refrain from" or "to be at rest." In the early days of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) asked Muslims to fast three days a month and this was not mandatory. However, in the second year of Hijrah, following the Qur'anic revelation (Q 2:183), the institution of fasting was enforced upon all Muslims as an obligatory duty.

Fasting (Siyam or Sawm) is one of the five pillars of Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have said:

> *"(The superstructure of), Islam is raised on five pillars:*
> *Tawhid-the oneness of Allah (Monotheism), Salat-the establishment of worship prayers, Zakat-the payment of poor due, Sawm-the fast of Ramadan and Hajj-the pilgrimage to Makka."* *(Bukhari and Muslim)*

Fasting is an act of obedience and submission to Allah's commands through the highest degree of commitment, sincerity and faithfulness. Its purpose is to seek Allah's mercy, to atone sins,

errors and mistakes, and to avoid condemnation to Hell.

Islamic fasting is a meaningful institution with a definite purpose. It has its own established rules and regulations, structure, and standard and specific functions.

Purpose of Fasting

The purpose of fasting is to have Muslims learn Taqwa and incur Allah's pleasure through self-restraint, self-discipline and self-purification. Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'la says in the Qur'an:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off (evil); (2:183)

"Taqwa" is a very comprehensive Quranic term implying both love and fear of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'la. It means (warding off) keeping the believer conscious of his Creator at all times and in all places. Hazrat Ka'ab (may Allah be pleased with him) - a prominent companion of the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him)-explained "Taqwa" in this way: When a wayfarer passes through a narrow path with thorny bushes on either side, he squeezes himself

and pulls his clothing around himself closely, so that he will not get entangled in the thorns. This is "Taqwa." The world is full of thorns such as lustful desires, ambitions, self-indulgence, greediness, etc. One should guard himself against all these evils by fearing Allah.

Fasting is prescribed so that Muslims remain conscious of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'la and, through earnest efforts of selfpurification, attain the rewards of inner peace and strength in this world and Paradise in the Hereafter.

Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying:

"There is zakat applicable to everything and zakat (purification) of body is fasting."

(Ibn Majah)

Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying:

"Every (good) deed a son of Adam does will be multiplied, a good deed receiving a ten-fold to seven hundred-fold reward. God has said: "With the exception of fasting, for it is done for My sake and I give a reward for it ..."

(Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is

reported to have said:

"Whoever observed fast embued with faith and with the expectation of reward from Allah, all his past sins are forgiven." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Kinds of Fasts

There are four kinds of fasts as follows:

I Obligatory fasts of the month of Ramadan

II Voluntary or Desirable Fasts

III Discouraged Fasts

IV Unlawful Fasts

Obligatory Fasts

There are three kinds of obligatory fasts:

1 Fasts of the month of Ramadan

2 Refasting the days missed in Ramadan

3 Fasting for atonement or expiation

Chapter II

Fasts of the Month of Ramadan

Observance of fasting in the month of Ramadan is an obligatory duty for every adult, sane, able and resident Muslim and Muslimah (Al-Qur'an 2:183).

Narrated Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

> *"Whoever did not fast for one day of Ramadan without legitimate excuse or a disease, then if he fasted for a complete year it would not compensate for that day."* *(Sahih Al-Bukhari)*

Denial of the obligatory nature of fasting in the month of Ramadan amounts to disbelief. One who avoids fasting without genuine reason is a sinner and transgressor according to the Islamic shariah.

Commencement

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar (lunar).[5] Obligatory fasting commences with the beginning of the month of Ramadan and terminates with the end of the month of

Ramadan.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have said:

"Do not fast unless you see Hilal[6] (of Ramadan) and do not give up fasting till you see it (of Shawwal)[7] but if the sky is overcast then complete thirty days." *(Sahih Muslim)*

Significance of Ramadan

Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'la revealed the Qur'an, a book of guidance for minkind, in the month of Ramadan and ordained Muslims to fast in this month. In Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow) Allah says:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِیْٓ اُنْزِلَ فِیْهِ الْقُرْاٰنُ هُدًی لِّلنَّاسِ وَ بَیِّنٰتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدٰی وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۚ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْیَصُمْهُ ؕ وَ مَنْ كَانَ مَرِیْضًا اَوْ عَلٰی سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ اَیَّامٍ اُخَرَ ؕ یُرِیْدُ اللّٰهُ بِكُمُ الْیُسْرَ وَلَا یُرِیْدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ۫ وَ لِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللّٰهَ عَلٰی مَا هَدٰىكُمْ وَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ۝۱۸۵

The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proof of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong). And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month, and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days. Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship for you; and (He desireth) that ye should complete the

period, and that ye should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that peradventure ye may be thankful. (2:185)

Regarding the significance of the month of fasting (Ramadan), Salman Al-Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him) reported Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as saying:

"A great month, a blessed month, containing a night[8] which is better than a thousand months has approached you people. Allah has appointed the observance of fasting during it as an obligatory duty, and the passing of its nights in prayer as voluntary practice. If someone draws near to Allah during it with some good deeds, he will be like one who fulfills an obligatory duty in another month. It is the month of endurance and the reward of endurance is Paradise.... It is a month whose beginning is mercy, whose middle is forgiveness and whose end is freedom from Hell...." (Sahih of Ibn Khuzaymah)

Ramadan brings spiritual uplifting to its observer. Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying:

"When Ramadan begins the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hell are locked and devils are chained." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Essentials of Fasting

(1) Niyyah or Intention of Fast

(2) Methodology of Fast

(1) Niyyah or Intention of Fast

For observing the fast, the intention of fasting is essential (Wajib). The intention for fasting in the month of Ramadan can either be made and recited daily or once for the whole month of Ramadan.

Intention[9] should be made preferably before the dawn of each day of fasting (in Ramadan) on the authority of the following hadith.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

> *"He who does not express his intention of fasting before dawn is not credited with it."*
>
> *(Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, Nasa'i, Darimi)*

Provision is made, however, if someone has forgotten to express his intention before dawn. In such case, one is allowed to express his intention of fasting before noon to avoid invalidation of the fast.

When made during the night for fasting the following day, the wordings of the Niyyah are:

نویت صوم رمضان لغد

"I intend to observe fast tomorrow for the month of Ramadan.

Niyyah can also be made before dawn at the time of Suhur (light predawn meal) of each day of fasting as follows:

وَبِصَوْمِ غَدٍ نَوَيْتُ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ

"I intend to observe fast for today."

(2) Methodology of Fast

Fasting in Islam involves abstinence from the three primal physical needs[10] of human beings - food, drink, and sexual intercourse - from dawn (approximately 1 1/2 hours before sunrise) to sunset with the intention of fasting. There are, however, no restrictions regarding these physical needs during the night time.

أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَىٰ نِسَآئِكُمْ ۚ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ ۗ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنكُمْ ۖ فَالْآنَ بَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَابْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۚ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ۖ ثُمَّ أَتِمُّوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ ۚ وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ ۗ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوهَا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾

It is made lawful for you to go unto your wives

on the night of the fast. They are garment for you and ye are garment for them. Allah is aware that ye were deceiving yourselves[11] in this respect and He hath turned in mercy toward you and relieved you. So hold intercourse with them and seek that which Allah hath ordained for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becometh distinct to you from the black thread of the dawn. Then strictly observe the fast till nightfall and touch them not, but be at your devotions in the mosques. These are the limits imposed by Allah, so approach them not. Thus Allah expoundeth His revelations to mankind that they may ward off (evil). (2:187)

In areas like the North Pole, South Pole, Scandinavia, etc., the days or nights are un-usually long, sometimes lasting several weeks. The dawn to sunset period of fasting for residents of such areas can be either similar to the number of hours from dawn to the sunset period in Makka or Madinah, or the number of hours from dawn to the sunset period in the nearest moderate place.

Suhur

Suhur is a light, pre-dawn meal recommended before actual fasting begins. It is considered to be a blessing. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported Prophet Muhammad (peace be

upon him) as saying:

Partake suhur, for there is blessing in suhur."
(Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Amr ibn al-As (may Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying:

"The difference between our fasting and that of the people of the Book is eating shortly before dawn." *(Muslim)*

In suhur, Muslims usually eat moist foods, high in protein and vitamins, such as eggs, cheese, milk, yogurt, bread, fruits, vegetables, etc.

The suhur is a blessing and hence recommended.

Iftar

Iftar is an Arabic term meaning breaking the fast immediately after the sunset. Iftar is a light snack consisting of dates or desserts, along with liquids such as water, juice or milk. This is eaten after making the following du'a for breaking the fast.

اَللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ صُمْتُ وَبِكَ اٰمَنْتُ وَعَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَعَلٰى رِزْقِكَ اَفْطَرْتُ.

"O Allah! I fasted for Your sake, and I am breaking my fast from the sustenance You

blessed me with, accept it from me."

Mu'adh bin Zuhra (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that when the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) broke his fast, he prayed as follows:

"O Allah! for Thee I have fasted and with Thy provision I have broken the fast." (Abu Dawud)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has emphasized the breaking of the fast soon after sunset, avoiding any delay. Sahl (may Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's messenger (peace be upon him) as saying:

"The people will continue to prosper as long as they hasten to break the fast (in time)."

Chapter III

Validation of Fast

There are three groups of conditions that determine the validation of the fast.

(1) Conditions that do not invalidate the fast.

(2) Conditions that invalidate the fast and require 'Qada.'

(3) Conditions that invalidate the fast and require 'kaffarah.'

Conditions that do not invalidate the fast

(1) Eating drinking or smoking by mistake, forgetting the fast. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"If anyone forgets that he is fasting and eats or drinks, he should complete his fast, for it is only Allah Who has fed him and given him drink." (Muslim)

(2) Unintentional vomiting in any quantity.

Narrated Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him):

"If a fasting person vomits, that does not break his fast, for while he vomits he expels something and does not swallow anything." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

(3) Cupping or letting out blood medically.

Narrated Ibn-e-Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him). Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was cupped when he was fasting. *(Sahih al-Bukhari)*

(4) Anything applied to the eye such as Kuhl[12] (collyrium or eye powder) and application of cosmetics including cream, hair oil, perfume, (itr), etc.

(5) Swallowing things which are not possible to avoid such as one's own saliva, street dust, smoke, etc.

(6) Brushing[13] the teeth unless the toothpaste enters the throat. Brushing the teeth with 'Miswak'[14] is desirable and recommended.

(7) Rinsing the mouth and nostrils with water, provided it is done without swallowing water.

(8) Bathing. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have poured water over his head while he was fasting either because of thirst or heat.

(Ahmad, Malik and Abu Dawud)

If water is swallowed unintentionally while bathing, it does not invalidate the fast. However, while fasting, gargling

should be avoided.

(9) In some special circumstances, if the food or drink is just tasted and then immediately removed from the mouth without allowing it to enter the throat.

(10) Kissing or embracing of the spouse. However, it is advisable to avoid this as it may lead to conjugal relationship resulting in breaking of the fast requiring 'Kaffarah.' Narrated 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her):

"The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to kiss and embrace (his wives) while he was fasting, and he had more power to control his desires than any of you."

(Sahih Al-Bukhari)

(11) State of Janabah. If a fasting person wakes up in the morning in the state of Janabah, having semen discharged either by sexual intercourse (before dawn) or through wet dream, he or she should take a ghusl (shower) and fast. Narrated 'Aisha' and Umm-e-Salma (may Allah be pleased with them):

"At times Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) used to get up in the morning in the state of Janabah after having sexual relations with his

wives. He would then take a bath and fast.".

(Sahih Al-Bukhari)

It must be noted here that the state of Janabah did not occur during the fasting period, instead it occurred before dawn (suhur) or after sunset (iftar).

Conditions that do invalidate fast and require Qada

(1) Eating, drinking or having sexual intercourse just after dawn or just before sunset, because of a mistaken assumption of dawn or sunset time.

(2) Water entering inside the throat while gargling[15] or rinsing the mouth.

(3) Any medicine entering through the mouth, ear, anus or sex organs, or through an injection.*

(4) Something unknowingly present in the mouth (such as remains of food) in the quantity more than a grain of graham which is intentionally swallowed.

(5) Intending to break the fast before sunset even if one changes his or her mind. (Intention being one of the essential prerequisites of the validity of fasting).

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* Some scholars allow non nutritional injection or I V during the fast.

(8) Vomiting deliberately.

(9) Ejaculation for reasons other than sexual intercourse.

(10) Beginning of menstruation or postnatal birth bleeding (even in the last moment of sunset).

Conditions mentioned above invalidate fasting and require "qada" (making up only the missed day or days).

Condition that does invalidate fast and requires Kaffarah

Intentionally and without any sound reason (like serious threat to life) eating or drinking something or carrying out sexual intercourse during the hours of a Ramadan Fast.

Chapter IV

Exemption from Fasting

The following categories of people are exempted from the obligatory fasting of Ramadan.

(1) Children[17] under the age of puberty.

(2) Insane persons.

(3) Elderly and chronically ill for whom fasting is an unreasonable strain.

Because of the special needs of geriatric nutrition, elderly and chronically ill people are exempted from obligatory fasting. They must, however, compensate their fast(s) with (Fidya) feeding poor and needy (Al-Qur'an 2:184)

Fidya

"Fidya" is an Arabic word literally meaning "to redeem" or "to pay ransom." During the month of Ramadan, if someone is too old or chronically ill and unable to fast, he must either feed a needy person or give in charity an amount equivalent to feeding one person a day for each day of fasting missed (Al Qur'an 2:184).

Breaking the fast under exceptional condition

Muslims are permitted to break the ordained fast of Ramadan when there is danger to their health. The Prophet (peace be upon him) encouraged Muslims to use this provision as a way of pleasing Allah.

An'as (may Allah be pleased with him) told about a journey with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) when some were fasting and others broke their fast. When they alighted at a stage on a hot day, those who fasted collapsed, while those who had broken their fast rose and set up the tents and watered the riding beasts. Therefore, God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

"Those who broke their fast have earned all the reward today." *(Bukhari and Muslim)*

In this situation, a Muslim should make up his fast later.

Reverence to the month of Ramadan

As a reverence to the month of Ramadan, anyone who is not fasting for any excuse should not eat or drink openly.

Chapter V

Refasting Days Missed in Ramadan

It is obligatory for the following categories of people to make up their fast(s), a day for a day (Qada), at another time of the year.

(1) Women during menstruation and during postnatal discharge.

Narrated Abu Sa'id (may Allah be pleased with him): The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

> *"Isn't it true that a woman does not pray and does not fast on menstruating and that is the defect (a loss) in her religion." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)*

(2) Women during pregnancy and lactation.

Considering the extra nutritional requirements of expectant, postnatal and nursing mothers, Islam relieves them from observing the obligatory fasting of Ramadan. They are to make up the lost obligatory fast(s), a day for a day, when they regain their normal physical states (Al Qur'an 2:185).

(3) Sick people with recoverable illness.

The importance of therapeutic nutrition is

realized and a provision is made for the sick and convalescents. They are given the privilege of not fasting in the month of Ramadan. They must, however, make up for their lost obligatory fast(s), a day for a day, when they regain normal health (Al-Qur'an 2:184).

(4) Travelers who cannot fast, such as one who is weak and for whom fasting would be harmful.

Provision is made realizing the nutritional needs of people under stress. Accordingly, travelers can make up their missing obligatory fast(s), a day for a day, when they return to their normal state. (Al-Qur'an 2:185).

Allah does not like his devotees to harm themselves needlessly. Ibn-e-Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) used say:

> *"Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) sometimes fasted and (sometimes) did not fast during the journey, so whoever wishes to fast can fast and whoever wishes not to fast can do so." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)*

Qada of deceased person

If someone dies who should have fasted (the missed days of Ramadan), the guardians or heirs of the deceased person must fast on his or her behalf (or give away fidya) because Allah's debt

should be paid.

Narrated 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her): Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) said:

"Whoever died and he ought to have fasted (the missed days of Ramadan), then his guardian or heirs must fast on his behalf."

(Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Time to make up missed fast(s)

The missed fast(s) can be made up at any other time of the year, either continuously or intermittently, Ibn-e-Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

"There is no harm to fast intermittently, as the statement of Allah shows:" (The prescribed period should be made up for) by fasting some other days." *(Sahih Al-Bukhari)*

Fasting for atonement or expiation

It is obligatory for a Muslim to fast as penance on the following occasions:

While performing Hajj (pilgrimage), a Muslim must sacrifice an animal on the first day of the feast of sacrifice (10th day of Dhu-al-Hijjah). If the pilgrim cannot afford this sacrifice, he must fast three days while still in the vicinity of Makka and another seven days after returning home. *(Al-Qur'an 2:196)*

If a Muslim breaks a valid oath, he must pay the cost of food for ten poor persons. If he cannot afford this, he must fast for three days in atonement. *(Al-Qur'an 5:89)*

Kaffarah

Kaffarah is an Arabic term which literally means "expiation" or "atonement." If one deliberately breaks the fast during a fasting period, he must liberate one slave,[18] or fast for sixty continuous days, or feed sixty needy persons, or give in charity an amount equal to the cost of feeding sixty persons. If one chooses to fast sixty days and the continuity is interrupted for any reason, genuine or otherwise except menstruation, one has to start the sixty day cycle again. Kaffarah is thus a sin offering.

(Bukhari and Muslim

Chapter VI

Impact of Fasting on a Muslim Society

The institution of fasting influences a Muslim society in a positive way. Fasting enhances the feeling of inner peace and provides tranquility of mind. It teaches patience and perseverance. Personal hostilities and aggressions are at their lowest.[19] Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) advised Muslims:

> *"If one slanders you or aggresses against you, say I am fasting."* *(Al-Hakim)*

Fasting is recommended for those who fear committing illegal sexual relations. Alqama (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported by Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) to have said:

> *"He who can afford to marry should marry, because it will help him refrain from looking at other women, and save his private parts from committing illegal sexual relation; and he who cannot afford to marry is advised to fast, as fasting will diminish his sexual power."* *(Sahih Al-Bukhari)*

For those who eat and/or drink (coffee, tea or other beverages) and/or smoke constantly, fasting is the best practice to reprogram the behavior or overindulgence.

Fasting leads to self-purification by refraining from all vice and evils. The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) said:

> *"If one does not abandon falsehood in words and deeds, Allah has no need for his abandoning of his food or drink."* *(Bukhari)*

Physical deprivation for spiritual uplifting brings about behavior modification. As everyone goes through the experience of deprivation, everyone feels a spirit of charity and sympathy towards the poor and needy. An attitude of sharing, concern and caring prevail during the month of Ramadan, providing a pattern for the rest of the year.

Special Blessings of Ramadan

In addition to fasting (sawm), there are three special blessings of Ramadan for practicing Muslims.

(1) Tarawih

(2) I'tikaf

(3) Laylat-al-Qadr

Tarawih

Tarawih[20] prayers are special additional sunnah worship prayers recommended in the month of Ramadan to be performed after the Isha prayers.[21]

Narrated Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him): Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) said:

> *"Whoever prayed at night the whole month of Ramadan out of sincere faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven."* *(Sahih Al-Bukhari)*

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to commend Tarawih prayers but he did not make them obligatory.

Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) said that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) used to commend prayer at night, but did not command it as a duty. (Muslim)

In the days of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Caliphate of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) and in the early days of Umar's (may Allah be pleased with him) Caliphate, Tarawih prayers were offered individually, not in congregation. It was Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) who initiated Tarawih prayers in congregation during the

month of Ramadan.

Abdur Rahman bin Abdul Qari (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

"I went out in the company of Umar bin al-Khattab one night in Ramadan to the mosque and found the people praying in different groups. A man praying alone or a man praying with a small group behind him. So Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said, 'In my opinion I would better collect these (people) under the leadership of one Qari (Reciter).' So, he made up his mind to congregate them behind Ubai bin ka'b. Then, on another night, I went again in his company and the people were praying behind their reciter. On that, Umar remarked 'What an excellent Bid'a (i.e. innovation in religion) this is; but the prayer which they do not perform, but sleep at its time is better than the one they are offering.' He meant the prayer in the last part of the night. (In those days) people used to pray in the early part of the night."

(Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Twenty rak'at[22] of Tarawih prayers are recommended every night after Isha prayer (in the month of Ramadan) preferably in the congregation. Tarawih prayers can also be offered individually.

I'tikaf

I'tikaf is a private devotional and meditative exercise of a Muslim in a mosque during the last ten days in the month of Fasting (Ramadan). Ibn-e-Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported God's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying about one who observes I'tikaf:

> *"He turns away from sins and he is rewarded like the one who does all good deeds in his lifetime."* *(Ibn Majah)*

During I'tikaf, a Muslim secludes himself in a mosque for prayers and invocations, leaving worldly affairs and engagements for a specified number of days.

Preferably, I'tikaf is observed during the last ten days of the month of Ramadan. One confines himself in the mosque day and night.

Narrated Abdullah bin Umar (may Allah be pleased with him):

> *"Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) used to practice I'tikaf in the last ten days of the month of Ramadan."* *(Sahih Al-Bukhari)*

Mu'takif (the one who is in I'tikaf) is allowed to go out of the mosque only for essential needs, such as relieving himself, taking ghusl (bath), or performing congregational prayer in a central mosque on Fridays.

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said that the Sunna for one who is observing a period of private devotion in a mosque is not to visit an invalid, attend a funeral, touch or embrace one's wife, or go out for anything other than necessary purposes. There is no period of private devotion in a mosque without fasting, and it must be carried out in a mosque where five congregational prayers are performed. (Ibn Majah)

Muslim women can observe I'tikaf in their own houses.

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) "used to engage in private devotion (i'tkaf) in the mosque during the last ten days and nights of Ramadan till God took him, and then his wives followed this practice[23] after his death."

(Bukhari and Muslim)

Laylat-al-Qadr (The Night of Power)

The noble Qur'an - the book of guidance for mankind - revealed in the Night of Power (laylat-al-Qadr). Allah says in Surat-al-Qadr (Power):

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficient, the Merciful.

Lo! We revealed it on the Night of Power.

Ah, what will convey unto thee what the Night

of Power is!

The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.

The angels and the Spirit descent therein, by permission of their Lord, with all decrees.

(That night is) Peace until the rising of the dawn. *(Al Qur'an 97:1-5)*

This blessed night is believed to be in the month of Ramadan.

Salman Al-Farsi (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"A great month, a blessed month (meaning Ramadan), containing a night which is better than a thousand months has approached you people...." *(Bukhari)*

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to exert himself in devotion during the last ten days and nights (of Ramadan) to a greater extent than at any other time. He (peace be upon him) recommended that Muslims search for the Night of Power (Qadr) in the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan.

Narrated 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her): Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) said:

"Search for the Night of Qadr in the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan."

(Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) said he heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say:

"Seek it (meaning Laylat-al-Qadr) on the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th or on the last night." (Tirmidhi)

Muslims ask for the forgiveness of their sins and exert themselves in prayers, invocations and in reciting Allah's Book on the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan to obtain the blessing of the Night of Qadr.

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said she asked God's Messenger (peace be upon him) to tell her what prayers to say on Laylat-al-Qadr, if she knew which night it was. He (peace be upon him) told her to say:

"O God, Thou art forgiving and lovest forgiveness, so forgive us."

(Ahmad, Ibn Majah and Tirmidhi)

Narrated Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him): The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"Whoever fasted the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his past sins will be forgiven, and whoever stood for the prayers in the night of Qadr out of sincere faith and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven." *(Sahih Al-Bukhari)*

Zakatul Fitr or Sadaqatul Fitr

Zakatul Fitr is instituted for the poor and needy people of the community so that they can also enjoy the pleasures and festivities at the end of the month of Ramadan.

Every adult Muslim or Muslimah possessing more food than he and his family needs for a (24 hours) day is mandated to pay Zakatul Fitr for himself or herself and all his or her dependents. One full meal per person or the cash equivalent of one full meal[24] is given directly to the needy and the poor before[25] Salatul Fitr (worship prayer of Eid-ul-Fitr). This is called Zakatul Fitr or Sadaqatul Fitr. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have said:

> *"Remember! Zakatul fitr is wajib (essential) on every Muslim man or woman, free or in servitude, adult[26] or child."*[27] *(Tirmidhi)*

It is reported in Bukhari that the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pay Zakatul Fitr a few days early so that the recipients could make arrangements for Eid-ul-Fitr.

The fasting of the month of Ramadan is not accepted by Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'la until a person has paid Zakatul Fitr.

Ibn-e-Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) made Zakatul Fitr obligatory for two purposes: to purify our fasting from vain talk and shameful mistakes and to provide food and clothing for the festival of Eid for the poor and needy.

(Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah)

The following categories of people are eligible to receive Zakatul Fitr:

"Zakah is only for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (fund); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to truth), for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of God and for the wayfarer, (thus it is) ordained by God, and God is full of knowledge and wisdom."

(Al Qur'an 9:60)

Recipients of Zakatul Fitr are the same who are eligible to receive the regular zakah (one of five obligatory essentials of Islam). The most deserving of Zakah or Zakatul Fitr are pious and poor Muslims.

Eid-ul-Fitr (Feast of Fast Breaking)

Marking the completion of Ramadan - the month of fasting - Eid-ul-Fitr is celebrated traditionally on the first day of the month of Shawwal - the tenth month of the Islamic

calendar. This is a "Thanksgiving Day" for Muslims. This festival is a manifestation of real joy and thankfulness for the provisions and opportunities which Allah has given Muslims to fulfill their obligations of fasting and good deeds during the month of Ramadan.

The joy and thankfulness is expressed collectively by all the Muslims in a community by remembering, praising and glorifying Allah with congregational prayers (Salat-ul-Fitr) offered in Idgah (open mosque) outside the city limits.

Salat-ul-Eid (Fitr) is wajib (essential) for every sane, adult Muslim. It consists of two rak'at (units) with six or thirteen additional 'takbir' (Allah-u-Akbar). It is offered in congregation and is followed by a sermon (khutba). Khutba is a part of worship and listening to Khutba is sunnah. It is recommended that every Muslim man, woman, and child participate in this joyous occasion.

Unity of Muslim Ummah Through Fasting

The institution of fasting in the month of Ramadan unifies Muslim societies and regulates their social lives. All Muslims, male and female, rich and poor, go through the same experience of

fasting with no privileges or favours to anyone This practice, followed by all the Muslims al over the world, every year at the same time fo the entire month, establishes equality and unifies Muslims for a virtuous and strong Muslim ummah.

Chapter VII

Voluntary or Desirable Fasts

The rules, regulations and methodology of fasting in Islam involve the identical structure and standards as described for fasting in Ramadan.

Since voluntary fasts are optional (Nafl), they can be observed or broken as one wishes. Umm-e-Hani (may Allah be pleased with her) reported God's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying:

> *"...The one who observes a voluntary fast is his own master; if he wishes he may fast, and if he wishes he may break it."*
>
> *(Ahmad and Tirmidhi)*

If one breaks the voluntary fast, he or she need not make it up (Qada) some other day (like the obligatory fast).

The intention of voluntary fasting can be made any time after dawn and before noon. It need not be made before dawn or at night (like obligatory fasting).

The following are desirable times for fasting, (superogatory fasting).

(1) Fasting in Muharram

Muharram is the first month of the Islamic calendar. Fasting on the tenth day (Ashura) of the month of Muharram is recommended.

Narrated 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her):

> *"Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) ordered the Muslims to fast on the day of 'Ashura', and when the fasting in the month of Ramadan was prescribed, it became optional for one to fast on that day (Ashura) or not." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)*

The tenth of Muharram is the day on which Allah rescued Bani Israel from their enemy. Hence Moses (peace be upon him) fasted on this day. In this tradition, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) recommended that Muslims fast on this day. Fasting on the 9th day of Muharram (a day prior to Ashura) is suggested to avoid similarity with the Jews. (Muslim)

(2) Fasting in Sha'ban

Sha'ban is the eighth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Fasting is encouraged in this month according to the following hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Narrated 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her):

"The Prophet (peace be upon him) never

fasted in any month more than in the month of Sha'ban..." *(Sahih Al-Bukhari)*

Fasting on the following day (15th day) of the middle night of Sha'ban is recommended on the authority of the following hadith.

Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) reported God's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying:

"When in the middle night of Sha'ban (Layat ul Nifsun Sha'ban) occurs spend the night in prayer and fast during the day, for in it God Most High comes down at sunset to the lowest heaven and says: 'Is there some one who asks for forgiveness so that I may provide him? Is there some one afflicted so that I may relieve him? Is there not such and such? Is there not such and such? The Divine call continues till the break of dawn." *(Ibn Majah)*

(3) Fasting in Shawwal

Shawwal is the tenth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Fasting for six days in the month of Shawwal after the celebration of Eidul Fitr is Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Abu Ayyub-al-Ansari (may Allah be pleased with him) told that God's Messenger said:

If anyone fails during Ramadan, then follows it with six days in Shawwal, it will be like a perpetual fast." *(Muslim)*

Thus, if one fasts six days in the month of Shawwal after fasting in the month of Ramadan, he would attain a fasting equivalent to one year.

(4) Fasting in Dhu-al-Hijjah

Dhu-al-Hijjah is the twelfth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. Muslims who are not on the pilgrimage (Hajj) are advised to fast the first nine days of the month of Dhu-al-Hijjah or at least on the ninth day (the day of 'Arafat). This day preceeds Eidul Adha (the yearly feast of sacrifice).

Hafsa (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) never missed four things:

"First the fast of Ashura (10th day of Muharram), second the fasts of the first nine days of Dhu-al-Hijjah (1st through 9th day), third the fasts for three days in every month, and fourth two rak'at (units) of salat before fajr." *(Ahmad, Nisa'i)*

Narrated Abu Qatadah (may Allah be pleased with him): The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"The fast on the day of 'Arafah (9th day of Dhu-al-Hijjah) pays the Kaffarah of sins of two years - the year which has passed and the year which is forthcoming..."

(Muslim, Abu Dawud, Nisa'i, Ahmad)

(5) Three days of fasts in every month

A Muslim may fast three days a month as a voluntary fasting. Mu'adha al-Adawiya (may Allah be pleased with her) said she asked 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) whether God's Messenger (peace be upon him) used to fast three days of every month, and she replied that he (peace be upon him) did. She asked which days in the month he (peace be upon him) fasted, and she replied that he (peace be upon him) did not care which days of the month he fasted.

(Muslim)

(6) Fasting twice weekly

Voluntary fasts may be observed twice weekly, preferably on Mondays and Thursdays. Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) reported God's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying:

"Men's deeds are presented (to God) on mondays and thursdays, and I like mine to be presented when I am fasting." *(Tirmidhi)*

Chapter VIII

Discouraged Fasts

(1) Fast on Friday only

Voluntary fasting only on Fridays is discouraged by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying:

> *"None of you must fast on a Friday unless he fasts the day before or the day after." (Muslim)*

(2) Singling out any particular day for fasting

A particular day should not be singled out for optional (Nafl) fasting nor a particular night for optional (Nafl) prayers.

Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying:

> *"Do not choose Thursday night as a particular night for prayer, and do not choose Friday as a particular day for fasting, unless it occurs during a fast one of you is observing." (Muslim)*

Ibn-e-Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

> *"I never saw the Prophet (peace be upon him)*

singling out any day's fast and considering it more excellent than another, except this day, the day of Ashura (the tenth of Muharram) and this month, meaning the month of Ramadan."

(Bukhari and Muslim)

(3) Perpetual fasting

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did not permit Muslims to undertake voluntary fasts for long periods of time which could endanger their lives and lead to weakness and illness.

Abdullah Ibn-e-'Amr Ibn al-As (may Allah be pleased with him) told of God's Messenger (peace be upon him) saying to him:

"Have you not been informed, 'Abdullah, that you fast during the day and get up at night for prayer?" When he replied that it was so, he said to him, "Do not do it. Fast and break your fast, get up for a prayer and sleep. For you have a duty to your body, your eye, your wife and your visitors. May he who observes a perpetual fast never fast. Fasting three days a month is equivalent to a perpetual fast. Fast three days every month and recite the Qur'an every month." *(Bukhari and Muslim)*

Chapter IX

Four Unlawful Fasts

(1) Fasting on Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha

Fasting on two Eid days is prohibited in Islam.

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) reported God's Messenger (peace be upon him) as saying:

"No fast is to be observed on two days, al-Fitr and al-Adha." *(Bukhari and Muslim)*

(2) Fasting on The Days of Tashriq

The 11th, 12th and 13th days of Dhu-al-Hijjah are known as the days of 'Tashriq'. On these days animal sacrifices are slaughtered. Fasting on the days of Tashriq is forbidden because these are the days of eating, drinking, and remembering Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'la.

Narrated 'Aisha and Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both):

"Nobody was allowed to fast on the days of Tashriq except those who could not afford the Hadi (sacrifice)." *(Sahih Al-Bukhari)*

(3) Fasting of a woman without husband's permission:

A woman is expected to ask permission from her husband to keep voluntary (Nafl) fast(s) if the husband is at home.

Narrated Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him): The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"A woman should not fast (optional fasts) except with her husband's permission, if he is at home (staying with her)." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

(4) Continuous Fasting (Al-Wisal)

The Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) forbade fasting continuously without breaking one's fast in the evening or eating before the following dawn.

Narrated 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her): Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) forbade Al-Wisal (continuous fasting) out of mercy to them. They said to him, "But you practice Al-Wisal?" He said, "I am not similar to you, for my Lord gives me food and drink."

(Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Chapter X

A Dietary Study of Muslim Students During Fasting in the Month of Ramadan

An ethno-scientific study with dietary analysis of Muslim students during fasting in the month of Ramadan was attempted at North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota (USA) in 1974.

The purposes of this ethno-scientific study were:

(1) To determine dietary adequacy of seven NDSU Muslim students during the month of fasting (Ramadan).

(2) To compare the nutrient contents of their usual diets with their diets during fasting and, thereby, to obtain knowledge concerning the differences, if any.

(3) To review the injunctions and regulations of Islam on Muslims as given by the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah in regard to fasting and dietary regulations.

Twenty-four hour food records were obtained

for three consecutive weeks (October 9 through October 30) from seven Muslim male students from India, Pakistan and Egypt who were attending North Dakota State University.

The first week of the study, week A (Days 21-28 of fasting), was representative of the diet during fasting; the second week of the study, week B (Days 1-7 following fasting), was representative of the transitional period; and the third week of the study, week C (Days 8-14 following fasting), was representative of their usual diet. Calorie and nutrient mean intakes for individuals as well as for the group for each of the three weeks of this study were computed based on the food intakes of three alternate days of the week, namely for Thursday, Saturday and Monday, as representative of the week.

Ages, heights, and weights of the subjects were recorded and their desirable weights were calculated. Weekly weight records of the students were taken. The National Research Council, Recommended Dietary Allowances (NRC-RDA) (1974) were used as standards to compare nutrient intake. The RDA's (except for energy) are estimated to exceed the requirements of most individuals and ensure that the needs of nearly all are met. According to Warnick, et al.

(1955) intakes as low as one-half of the NCR-RDA cannot be expected to promote health in most individuals and intakes below 2/3 of the allowances would allow little or no "margin of safety" to take care of emergency needs, individual differences in absorption and utilization or losses in food preparation and storage.

Calorie, protein, thiamine, riboflavin and niacin allowances were adjusted on the basis of mean desirable weights according to the U.S. National Research Council, Recommended Dietary Allowances (NRC-RDA) (1974). Computed calorie and nutrient mean intakes of the group during week A, week B, and week C were compared with the adjusted U.S. NRC-RDA (1974). Also, the percent of the NRC-RDA provided by the computed mean intakes were calculated and compared.

Findings of this study included the following:

The mean computed intakes for all subjects as a group during the three weeks of study did not meet the 1974 adjusted NRC-RDA for calories and thiamine. However, no mean intake of the group fell below one-half of the NRC-RDA. Increases in the respective intakes of

calories and thiamine were observed following fasting.

Mean intake of the group for calcium and riboflavin were also found below and adjusted 1974 NRC-RDA during fasting; however, the mean calorie, thiamine, riboflavin and calcium intakes during fasting were at or near the two-thirds level of NRC-RDA (1974). Following the fast, mean calcium and riboflavin intakes of the group were found to be increased and met the NRC-RDA.

Weight lost by the students during fasting ranged from 1 to 8 lbs. Every subject gained weight in the first week following fasting and four subjects continued to gain weight in the following weeks (up to four weeks following the fasting after which no further weight records were kept).

During fasting, consumption of fruit juices (especially orange juice) was greater and more frequent after breaking the fast each day to quickly satisfy thirst than in the weeks following the fast. This resulted in the highest intake of ascorbic acid during the fast.

Had the study been conducted in the students' own food and cultural environment in their

respective home countries, the results of the study might have been somewhat different. Five of the seven men subjects were single and were responsible for their own food preparation, which would generally not have been the situation in their own countries.

Knutsson, et al. (1970) conducted an anthropological and nutritional study on the fasting of Christians in Ethiopia. Although no dietary study was conducted on Muslims during fasting, they felt justified in assuming that the widespread under-nutrition in Ethiopian Muslim communities was not severely worsened during Ramadan because there is no restriction with respect to food consumed at night during fasting. They stated that the food in fact may be more varied and nutritious during Ramadan fasting than the food consumed at other times of the year.

This study concluded that the dietary intakes of Muslim students were not inadequate during fasting and there was no significant difference between their diets during fasting and the normal intakes except that the energy intakes were at or near the $^2/_3$ level of NRC-RDA during fasting. In other words, fasting involves a change in feeding schedules but this practice does not lead to inadequate food intake.

Notes

1. Jews fast on this day in memory of deliverance from Pharoah.
2. Leviticus 16:29, 31; 23:27-32 and Numbers 29:7-11.
3. Matthew 6:16-18. See also Matthew 9:14-15; Luke 5:33-35 and Mark 2:18-20.
4. Suratul Baqarah, Ayah 183.
5. The Islamic calendar is purely lunar. About 354 or 355 days make a lunar year as compared to the solar year which is comprised of 365 days according to the Gregorian calculations. The month of Ramadan begins about 11days in advance of the preceding one in the solar calendar. The month of Ramadan thus falls turn by turn in all seasons of the year. The lunar calendar, therefore, is most appropriate for a world community of Muslims, alternating ease and hardship of fasting period equitably.
6. Hilal: An Arabic word for crescent (new moon). The month begins with the appearance of the new moon on the horizon at sunset.
7. Shawwal: The tenth month of the Islamic calendar.
8. Laylat al-Qadr: See Al-Qur'an 97:1-5. Details of this night can be found elsewhere in this book.
9. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is reported to have said: "The acts are judged by their intentions." (Al-Bukhari) Although niyyah is essential for fasting, utterance of the words of niyyah is not necessary.
10. Control of, or abstinence from, the satisfaction of thirst which is basic to man's very existence, hunger which has always played a major role in determining the action and attitude of man, and sexual gratification which is universally held to be one of the pleasures of life, are

used as the means to arrive at the state of purity and holiness. Fasting involves conscious renunciation of the mentioned physical needs which are lawful in themselves (unless it is otherwise mentioned) to consecrate life to a higher purpose.

11. Maghrib Prayer: One of the five obligatory worship prayers, performed immediately after sunset every day.
12. Kuhl or Surma: Collyrium or eye powder is the powder of antimony sulphide, traditionally applied into the eyes.
13. Although brushing the teeth is allowed, it should preferably be avoided because any amount of toothpaste swallowed will invalidate the fast.
14. Miswak is an Arabic word meaning "tooth cleaner." It is made of wood (Salvadora indica).
15. While fasting, gargling is not essential for completion of ghusl.
16. See details of 'Kaffarah' elsewhere in this book.
17. Children over 10-12 years of age may be encouraged to observe fast on and off during Ramadan to prepare and train them.
18. This is not applicable in the present age.
19. Dr. Shahid Ather in his article "Fasting and Your Health" reported that these effects are not only spiritual but also due to metabolic factors. Sometimes, abnormal behavior is related to outbursts of hormones like ephinephrine, too much or too little thyroid and testosterone, and low or high blood sugar. While fasting all these parameters are made more even in their secretions instead of the wide fluctuations which occur in one's day-to-day life.
20. Tarweeha (singular or Tarawih) is an Arabic term meaning "relaxation."

21. Isha Prayers: One of the five obligatory daily worship prayers performed in the night.
22. Discussing the therapeutic effects of Tarawih prayer, Dr. Shahid Ather, clinical Associate professor of Medicine at Indiana University, School of Medicine, write that additional prayers of Tarawih help metabolize extra amounts of food that might have been eaten during Iftar and dinner followed by the entire day's fasting. Using a calorie counter, Dr. Ather found that 10 extra calories output is used for each rak'at of prayer (salat). Thus 20 rak'at burn 200 calories. Moreover, prayers (salat) is a better form of physical exercise than aerobic exercises because it is mild and uses all muscles and joints of the body.
23. (Mirqat says that Prophet's wives (may Allah be pleased with them) observed periods of seclusion for devotion, not in the mosque but in their houses).
24. The Prophet upon whom be peace, made incumbant on every male or female, free man or slave, the payment of one sa' of dates, or barley, as Zakat-ul-Fitr (or said Sadaqah Ramadan). (Al-Bukhari)
25. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever paid it (Zakatul fitr) before Salatul fitr, it is an acceptable zakat before Allah. Whoever paid it after Salatul fitr it is just a charity." (Ibn Da'ud, Ibn Majah)
27. Even those persons who did not fast in the month of Ramadan should pay Zakatul fitr.
27. Zakatul fitr is wajib (essential) also for the infant born or the one who died before fajr (dawn) on the day of Eidul fitr.